Misuse of Fare Concession for Handicapped

†4373. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that concession in fare given to the handicapped is being misused considerably;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to take any concrete steps to curb the misuse of above facility; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) to (c) On receipt of complaints regarding misuse of concessions to disabled persons, the certificates for grant of concession to orthopaedically handicapped/paraplegic, blind, deaf and dumb and mentally retarded persons were revised in May, 1998. The most important changes made were the provision of photograph and address of the concerned disabled person on the certificate.

Operating Ratio of the Railways

4374. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Operating Ratio of the Railways has consistently been rising during the last four years and this trend is propelling the Railways towards bankruptcy;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps the Railways are adopting to make a conscious effort to reverse this slide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Operating Ratio has been affected mainly from implementation of the recommendations of Vth Central Pay Commission and Government's decision thereon relating to wages and allowances to staff and higher benefits to pensioners. This has resulted in increase the working expenses. Further, in 1998-99 earnings were severely affected due to a reduction in freight loading as a result of economic slowdown.

(c) The effect of the spurt in staff costs and pension liabilities is likely to smoothen in the coming years. Measures to control expenditure by improving

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

staff productivity, asset utilisation,inventory management, fuel consumption, austerity in areas such as travel, publicity, hospitality etc. are being implemented. In earnings, healthy growth is expected from the improved economic scenario and aggressive marketing with improved freight services and commercial incentives. Non-traditional sources of revenue such as utilisation of right of way for laying of Optic Fibre Cable, commercial utilisation of land and air space, advertising rights at stations and on rolling stock etc. are also expected to contribute to improvement in the Operating Ratio. Besides, all efforts are being made to curb leakage of revenue and pilferages.

Railway Projects in Maharashtra

4375. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the Railway projects submitted by the Maharashtra Government during the last three years and the estimated cost thereof;

(b) the details of action taken by Union Government thereon;

(c) the details of progress made on ongoing projects in terms of targets set; and

(d) the details of action plan/new projects proposed during 2000-2001?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) to (d) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Railway overbridges in Tamil Nadu

4376. SHRI S. AGNIRAJ : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of proposals for construction of rail overbridges at various stations/railway crossings in Tamil Nadu Division of Southern Railway, pending as on December, 1999;

(b) the present status of these proposals;

(c) how long they are pending; and

(d) the total number of accidents which occurred at spots where these bridges are not constructed ?